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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the rationale for faculty rank, status, and tenure for librarians at the College of Charleston. A brief historical overview of the profession of librarianship traces the evolution of the function of the today's librarian as a participant in the processes of teaching and research. Standards for academic status are given, as well as criteria for evaluation. Suggested criteria include: (1) professional competence and activity; (2) activities related to inquiry and research; (3) teaching or instructional effectiveness; (4) service to the institution; and (5) public service. It is suggested that only by acceptance of the standards presented can librarians be evaluated by their peers.  
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LIBRARIANS AND ACADEMIC STATUS:

A POSITION PAPER

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As the primary means through which students and faculty gain access to the... synthesis of organized knowledge, the college and university library performs a unique and indispensable function in the educational process. This function will grow in importance as students assume greater responsibility for their own intellectual and social development. Indeed all members of the academic community are likely to become increasingly dependent on skilled professional guidance in the acquisition and use of library resources as the forms and numbers of these resources multiply, scholarly materials appear in more languages, bibliographical systems become more complicated, and library technology grows increasingly sophisticated. The librarian who provides such guidance plays a major role in the learning process.

--"Statement on Faculty Status of  
College and University Librarians"

Historically the educational philosophies of higher education and of academic librarianship have developed along parallel lines, with the effectiveness of higher education continuing to depend upon the close cooperation between library staff and classroom teaching staff. On occasion, because of pressures and desires to more specifically define the faculty along traditional lines, some administrative officers have raised the question as to the most appropriate rank and status of the professional librarian in the academic community. This question has been further complicated by the expansion and diversification of the discipline of library science and of the role of the librarian. It is the purpose of this paper to elucidate the key issues as they pertain to the question of faculty rank, status and tenure for the librarians at the College of Charleston.

#### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the mid-nineteenth century when the profession of librarianship, accompanied by a formal course of study in the theory and practice of librarianship, began to emerge as a distinct specialty, very few colleges and universities had full-time librarians. Generally library staffing was minimal, often part-time; therefore, the major responsibility for collection development and organization was assumed by faculty members who simultaneously taught courses in their individual fields of competence.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as these library responsibilities consumed an ever greater share of the faculty member's academic activities,

the role of the full-time librarian was clarified. Librarians then began to define their position in the academic community. Robert B. Downs notes that President Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins University, a former librarian, stated in 1891 that "the librarian's office should rank with that of professor... The profession of librarian should be distinctly recognized. Men and women should be encouraged to enter it, should be trained to discharge its duties, and should be rewarded, promoted, and honored in proportion to the services they render."<sup>1</sup>

Pursuing this theme, W.E. Henry, librarian of the University of Washington, at a 1911 American Library Association (ALA) conference declared: "With such preparation and such relationship to the educational process I shall claim that the [professional] library staff must rank with the faculty or teaching staff of any department."<sup>2</sup> With the growing importance of research and the research professor, and with the acceptance of library science as an intellectual discipline, librarians were in "the circle of the teaching faculties."<sup>3</sup> And although these early proponents of the science of librarianship did not always possess either specialized or advanced education in their adopted field, today's librarians acknowledge the necessity for advanced formal study in their chosen profession.

#### PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND EDUCATION

The librarian performs diverse academic functions through responsibility for effective organization and retrieval of recorded knowledge, the dissemination and expansion of which provide the basis for higher education. With the library serving as the scholarly nexus of the academic society, it is vital that the librarian be cognizant of the specific educational goals of the institution.

The librarian, in conjunction with the teaching staff, must interpret these goals within the context of the overall trends of higher education and integrate them into the creation of a well-developed and organized collection of resource materials. The librarian must also stimulate attainment of these goals through assumption of an active role as part of an innovative and involved faculty.

This role requires, as well, supporting scholarly investigations of the whole academic community; instructing students both formally in the classroom and informally in the library; engaging in research in library interests; refining technological methods of information retrieval; critically assessing materials for collection development; extending bibliographic control over the collection; and providing a variety of information services. In regard to this role of the librarian-as-generalist, it is imperative to recognize that "neither administrative responsibilities nor professional degrees, titles, or skill per se, qualify members of the academic community for faculty status. The function of the librarian as participant in the processes of teaching and research is the essential criterion of faculty status."<sup>4</sup>

Even a minimal level of performance of these functions is dependent upon successful completion of a formal education program. In the library profession, the Master's is presently considered the terminal degree similar to those terminal degrees accepted by "engineers, architects, lawyers, artists, musicians, and certain other groups who belong to the college or university community, but who have customarily followed [unique] patterns of training."<sup>5</sup>

The growing acknowledgement of the benefits of an additional and/or advanced degree to complement the Master's in library science defines the need for librarians

to augment their role as generalists. Professional organizational support for the desirability of advanced education for librarians is evidenced in a study researched by Arthur M. McNally and adopted by ALA. His statement emphasized that "while there may be terminal academic degrees, there never can be an end to the continued learning which alone insures against inflexibility in the face of new problems."<sup>6</sup> Additionally, "the growing demand in colleges, and especially universities, for specialists in subjects, languages, areas and forms of material also requires that librarians be permitted and encouraged to pursue advanced degrees."<sup>7</sup>

#### STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC STATUS

Since librarians contribute significantly to the development of library holdings and the ease and imagination with which those resources are made accessible, the nature of which in large measure shapes the character and quality of an institution of higher learning,<sup>8</sup> and since librarians are committed to continuing education and specialization, faculty status for librarians entails "the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlement to rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds. They must go through the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards as other faculty members."<sup>9</sup>

In order to recognize formally the college or university librarian's academic status, the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Library Association endorse, and urge all institutions of higher education and their governing bodies to adopt, the following standards for all academic librarians:

1. Professional responsibilities and self determination. Each librarian should be assigned general responsibilities within his particular area of competence. He should have maximum possible latitude in fulfilling these responsibilities. However, the degree to which he has fulfilled them should be regularly and rigorously

reviewed. A necessary element of this review must be appraised by a committee of peers who have access to all available evidence.

2. Library governance. College and university libraries should adopt an academic form of governance. The libraries should form as a library faculty whose role and authority is similar to that of the faculties of a college, or the faculty of a school or a department.
3. College and university governance. Librarians should be eligible for membership in the academic senate or equivalent body at their college or university on the same basis as other faculty.
4. Compensation. The salary scale for librarians should be the same as that for other academic categories with equivalent education and experience. Librarians should normally be appointed for the academic year. If a librarian is expected to work through the summer session, his salary scale should be adjusted similarly to the summer session scale of other faculty at his college or university.
5. Tenure. Librarians should be covered by tenure provisions the same as those of other faculty. In the pretenure period, librarians should be covered by written contracts or agreements the same as those of other faculty.
6. Promotion. Librarians should be promoted through ranks and steps on the basis of their academic proficiency and professional effectiveness. A peer review system similar to that used by other faculty is the primary basis of judgment in the promotion process for academic librarians. The librarians' promotion ladder should have the same titles, ranks, and steps as that of other faculty.
7. Leaves. Sabbatical and other research leaves should be available to librarians on the same basis, and with the same requirements, as they are available to other faculty.
8. Research funds. Librarians should have access to funding for research projects on the same basis as other faculty.
9. Academic freedom. Librarians in colleges and universities must have the protection of academic freedom. Library resources and the professional judgment of librarians must not be subject to censorship.<sup>10</sup>

These standards have been publicized and all organizations of higher education have been encouraged to formally adopt and endorse them. (Institutions that fail to comply with these standards are liable to sanctions by ALA.)

#### CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Given these standards advanced by the professional organizations, and given that the professional library staff of the College of Charleston currently has

faculty rank, it would be appropriate and advantageous for the College to adhere to these standards in order to maximize the available talents and resources of the staff. Likewise, criteria equivalent to that normally considered for faculty evaluation and promotion should be applied to librarians at the College. Acknowledging that the established primary criteria for evaluation and promotion of teaching staff do not fully delineate the functions of the librarian, we propose the following criteria:<sup>11</sup>

A. Professional competence and activity

- Active participation in professional associations, not limited to library associations
- Study for additional and/or advanced degrees and efforts toward professional growth
- Recognition of an additional and/or advanced degree as a complement to the Master's degree
- Possession of special academic or scholarly qualifications, e.g. unusual language or subject background or additional advanced degrees
- Knowledgeability in matters of educational philosophy and administration
- Ability to perform at a high level in areas that contribute to the educational and research mission of the institution such as: reference service, collection development, information organization and control
- Effectiveness in translating educational goals of the university into library programs and priorities
- Assistance and advisement of faculty and administrative officers in their scholarly pursuits
- Effectiveness in promoting wider use of library resources and services
- Provision of skilled professional guidance in the acquisition and use of library resources
- Demonstrated quality of performance as measured by competence in application of professional knowledge and principles of librarianship
- Demonstrated ability and capacity for administration in analyzing and solving library problems
- Ability to handle successfully increasing responsibility
- Potential for growth with evidence of leadership

B. Activities related to inquiry and research

- Publication of books, articles, reviews and reports of a scholarly nature
- Preparation of high-level internal administrative studies and reports
- Presentation of papers at group sessions
- Service as a member of a team of experts, task force, review committee or similar body
- Bibliographic research performed by librarians in support of the research activities of others
- Mastery of bibliographic resources
- Development of research collections
- Planning and preparation of extensive library exhibits
- Involvement in consulting work

C. Teaching or instructional effectiveness

- Efficiency in the performance of library technical operations supporting teaching and research programs
- Effectiveness in the development and use of library resources for undergraduate, graduate, and research programs
- Effectiveness in formal classroom teaching
- Effectiveness in indirect individual teaching in the library setting
- Effectiveness in library orientation lectures and guest lectures on bibliographic resources in subject areas
- Skill in communicating with library patrons and responding to their information needs

D. Service to the institution

- Supervision of library personnel
- Advisement of students
- Participation in campus groups, honorary and professional societies and service or university committees
- Service and leadership in the internal affairs of the university beyond the duties of the position
- Organization of workshops, institutes or similar meetings
- Public appearances in the interest of librarianship or information transfer
- Potential for long-term contribution to the institution

E. Public service

- Participation in professional activities in the state and the nation
- Service in a consultative capacity

SUMMARY

Truly effective exploitation of the staff's unique education and expertise depends upon the acceptance and implementation by the administration of the standards enumerated on pages four and five of this document. Only upon acceptance of these standards can the librarians be evaluated by their peers in accordance with the specified criteria. (It should be kept in mind that a "reasonable amount of time--three to five years--should be provided colleges and universities which do not currently conform to any or all of these standards, to enable them to do so.")<sup>12</sup>

Contributions of the present library faculty to the institution, as well as the potential of those members to be recruited in the future, can be fully realized

only with the granting of full faculty benefits including adequate support staff to perform non-professional routine duties, available leave to allow for pursuit of advanced degrees, access to research funding to support scholarly endeavors including publication, and adoption of a faculty departmental governing structure. The above needs are not unique to the College of Charleston. The "Statement on **Faculty Status of College and University Libraries**" drafted by the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of American Colleges, and the American Association of University Professors, which has been endorsed by more than forty library and/or academic associations, supports the necessity of faculty rank and status for librarians. And if the library at the College of Charleston is to continue to assume this dynamic role as catalyst for the interchange and amplification of ideas, it is imperative that it be staffed by professionals who are fully integrated into the intellectual rhythm of the academic community.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Robert B. Downs, "The Role of the Academic Librarian, 1876-1976," COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES 37 (November 1976): 493, quoting D.C. Gilman, "University Libraries, an Address at the Opening of the Sage Library of Cornell University, October 7, 1891," in his UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS IN THE UNITED STATES (New York: Century, 1898), p. 245-55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 495, quoting W.E. Henry, "The Academic Standing of College Library Assistants and their Relation to the Carnegie Foundation," BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 5 (May 1911): 259-60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 496, quoting from E.C. Richardson, "The Place of a Library in a University," BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 10 (January 1916): 1-13.

<sup>4</sup>"Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians," COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES NEWS 35 (February 1974): 26.

<sup>5</sup>Downs, "The Role of the Academic Librarian, 1876-1976," p. 499.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur M. McNally, "Status of the University Librarian in the Academic Community," in FACULTY STATUS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS: A HISTORY AND POLICY STATEMENTS (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975), p. 21, quoting W.H. Jesse and A.E. Mitchell, "Professional Staff Opportunities for Study and Research," COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES 29 (March 1968): 88.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>8</sup>"Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians."

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>"Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians," COLLEGE AND RESEARCH LIBRARIES NEWS 35 (May 1974): 112-113.

<sup>11</sup>This selective list has been compiled from the relevant professional literature.

<sup>12</sup>"Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians," p. 113.